GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
AGRICULTURE
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:3911
ANSWERED ON:20.04.2010
AGRICULTURE EXTENSION SYSTEM
Yadav Shri Dharmendra

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government proposes to make any special provision for the agriculture extension system and for lifting various restrictions on the sale of farmers' produce; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

Answer

MINISTER OF THE STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND MINISTER OF THE STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (PROF. K.V. THOMAS)

(a): Yes, Madam. Special provisions have been made in the agriculture extension system.

There is no restriction on farmers for the sale of their produce in the country.

(b): In order to overcome systemic constraints being faced by the Extension machinery in the country, a Centrally Sponsored Scheme `Support to State Extension Programmes for Extension Reforms` was launched in the year 2005-06 and is currently operational in 591 rural districts of 29 States and 2 UTs in the country. Despite providing fillip to major extension reforms such as bottom-up planning, broad-based extension delivery, involvement of multi-agency service providers, mainstreaming gender concerns in agriculture etc., the scheme was unable to show significant impact due to lack of committed manpower support for extension and existing vacancies in the States. Realizing that challenges posed by climate variability have become more pronounced in the recent years and the situation warrants preparing farmers to quickly adapt to these changes, the aforesaid scheme has been recently (March 2010) strengthened to provide:-

a. Specialist and Functionary Support at different levels viz. State (One post - Coordinator & 7 posts at State Agricultural Management & Extension Training Institutes); District (5 posts per district); and Block level (3 posts per block);

b. Innovative support through a Farmer Friend (FF) at village level (one FF per 2 villages) to promote Farmer -to-farmer learning and extension. The FF, who would be one to lead by example, will be engaged by the Block Technology Manager on the advice of Gram Panchayat which in turn will consult the Farmer Interest Groups operational within that Panchayat;

c. Enhanced support for mobility and connectivity at district/block; and

d. Essential infrastructure support for the State Agricultural Management & Extension Training Institute which would be in proportion to the number of blocks these have to cater to.

Some improvements in Agri-clinic and Agri-business centres and Kisan Call Centres schemes are also contemplated.